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# Capital Theories: Master Spy or Father's Angst?

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 5 — The case of the double defector teased this city today with an array of hypothetical scenarios, most of which portrayed the Soviet intelligence agent as either a master of duplicity or a victim of personal frailty.

"This is his personal tragedy," one veteran intelligence official concluded. This official opted for the "post-partum blues" theory to explain the announcement by the Soviet agent, Vitaly Yurchenko, that he was heading home after having fled from the captivity of American intelligence agents.

"One possibility for a charade like this," said another American intelligence specialist, "would be to discredit the Administration's human rights campaign at the summit or to traumatize our intelligence system."

This source focused on the double agent speculation, which says Mr. Yurchenko's escapade was premeditated by his Government to reap propaganda points ahead of President Reagan's summit meeting with Mikhail S. Gorbachev.

## 'Razzle-Dazzle'

Between the two basic theories was a palette of speculative shades coloring Mr. Yurchenko as everything from an anguished father to a calculating K.G.B. agent. But the capital is still wondering about what truth might underlie an espionage spectacle worthy of pulp fiction.

"Fun and games, razzle-dazzle,"

said William E. Colby, a former Director of Central Intelligence, who favored the "blues" scenario. He said Mr. Yurchenko was a genuine defector who had had second thoughts about his family and had decided to "go home and face the music."

"You have to be open to its being a put-on," Mr. Colby said. "But frankly I don't think so. The Soviets wouldn't risk a high-level officer for a thing like this."

Another intelligence veteran strongly disagreed, saying, "That Russian was tough and impressive at his press conference yesterday."

## Plot by Moscow Asserted

"He did exactly what Moscow had planned," this official added. He contending the intention and effect were to "pull the rug out" from American spies overseas in dealing with their sources and to create wide doubt about the value of espionage reports.

While intelligence specialists say they have heard no hard evidence to prove either hypothesis, some agreed that Soviet propaganda has been well served by Mr. Yurchenko's timing.

"Even if the Russians only lucked out and he simply changed his mind," said Roy Godson, a Georgetown University professor who specializes in intelligence matters, "they are using it in their propaganda mode, trying to distract the Administration and the world from the theme of human rights at the summit meeting."

A crucial question, Mr. Godson said, is the effect that Mr. Yurchenko's return might have on informa-

tion helps the Soviets and demoralizes the C.I.A.," he said.

Intelligence specialists pored over the transcript of the news conference held Monday by Mr. Yurchenko. Some particularly savored the irony in his description of a meeting with William J. Casey, the Director of Central Intelligence. "If I make some mistake, please ask Mr. Casey to verify it," he said of one of the most inaccessible men in the capital.

More revealing for some was the advice Mr. Yurchenko said he offered his troubled 16-year-old son: "If you really think about it you can always find a way out of any situation."

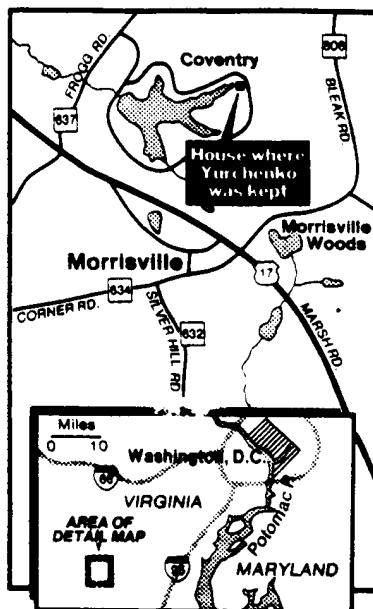
One intelligence official speculated that the Soviet defector had followed his own advice after quickly becoming discouraged, "particularly when he found out that the United States could not deliver on its promise of anonymity."

## Impact of Publicity

Various officials stressed the impact of publicity and increased Congressional oversight after the defection was reported last summer in an Italian newspaper.

Others contended Mr. Yurchenko had actually sought the celebrity to ultimately embarrass American intelligence officials.

One of the few experts professing to be blasé about the affair was Richard Helms, former Director of Central Intelligence. "The town's having a great time over this," he said. "But I don't know the inside story and I'm not biting."



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Vitaly Yurchenko said he stayed at a house in a Washington suburb.

tion he gave to American agents.

"High-level chicken feed" was Mr. Godson's estimate of that information, based on press accounts. A change of heart by Mr. Yurchenko after three months was possible, the professor said, but he said his studies of defectors who return home showed they usually wait a year or more.

"This happened quickly and the

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The house near Fredericksburg, Va., that is said to have been used by the Central Intelligence Agency as a safe house for Vitaly Yurchenko.